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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY MAN SENTENCED  
TO 87 MONTHS FOR \$1 MILLION WIRE FRAUD**

**GREENBELT**, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that today U.S. District Court Judge Peter J. Messitte sentenced Charles Tilghman, age 38, of Prince George's County, to 87 months in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release arising from his guilty plea to wire fraud. Judge Messitte also ordered that Tilghman pay \$1,076,797.63 in restitution and to forfeit to the United States \$34,730 seized from his bank accounts.

As part of the plea agreement presented to the court on February 12, 2004, Tilghman acknowledged that beginning in 2001 and continuing until his arrest in February, 2003, he, along with others, devised a scheme to defraud merchant banks which provide credit card processing services to small businesses. As part of that scheme, Tilghman and his co-defendants incorporated several companies including Good Painters, E-Lete Tile Designers, Mirakle Metals, Inc., Metal Work Madness, Inc. and Cut Right Carpet & Tile, Inc. They then applied for and received "point

of sale” terminals from Merchant E Solutions and Global Payments Group in the name of those businesses. Using stolen credit card account numbers, Tilghman then submitted fake charges for “services”. The money from the merchant banks was then wired to bank accounts set up by Tilghman and others. The total amount of the loss to the merchant banks from the fraudulent businesses set up as part of the scheme was \$1,118,963.44.

The case was investigated by the United States Secret Service and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna C. Sanger.